

Message Text

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PAGE 01 PORT O 00747 081400Z
ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06
TRSE-00 SIL-01 /064 W
-----016962 090031Z /75

R 081300Z MAR 78
FM AMEMBASSY PORT OF SPAIN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2115
INFO AMEMBASSY BRIDGETOWN
AMEMBASSY GEORGETOWN
AMEMBASSY KINGSTON

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE PORT OF SPAIN 0747

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PINT, TD
SUBJECT: PANDAY MOVES STEP CLOSER TO REGAINING
LEADERSHIP OF OPPOSITION

REF: PORT OF SPAIN A-6 OF FEBRUARY 15, 1978

1. ON MARCH 6, WINSTON NANAN, AN OPPOSITION UNITED LABOR FRONT (ULF) MP WHO PREVIOUSLY HAD SIDED WITH THE CURRENT LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION, RAFFIQUE SHAH, IN THE PARTY'S LEADERSHIP STRUGGLE, ANNOUNCED HE HAS SWITCHED HIS BACKING TO BASDEO PANDAY. NANAN STATED THAT HIS DECISION WAS PROMPTED BY HIS BELIEF THAT EXTREME LEFTIST ELEMENTS IN THE SHAH FACTION WERE DETERMINED TO SUBVERT DEMOCRACY IN THE COUNTRY. NANAN EXPLAINED FURTHER THAT THE ULF SPLIT, TO WHICH HE HAD CONTRIBUTED, HAD ENCOURAGED THE STATE-OWNED SUGAR COMPANY, CARONI LTD., TO ADOPT ITS CURRENT TOUGH LINE IN THE NEGOTIATIONS WITH PANDAY'S SUGAR WORKERS' UNION.

2. THE ULF BOXSCORE NOW HAS PANDAY AND SHAH EVEN WITH
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FIVE MPS EACH. HOWEVER, ONE OF SHAH'S MPS, BOODRAM JATTAN, RECENTLY WAS CONVICTED OF A CRIME AND SENTENCED TO IMPRISONMENT. IF JATTAN'S PENDING APPEAL IS UNSUCCESSFUL, HE WILL LOSE HIS SEAT AND A BY-ELECTION WILL BE REQUIRED. IF SHAH WERE TO LOSE JATTAN'S SEAT, PANDAY WOULD BECOME LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION AGAIN.

3. COMMENT. NANAN'S SWITCH HAS DEFINITELY IMPROVED PANDAY'S SITUATION, BUT THE ERSTWHILE ULF LEADER HAS OTHER THINGS ON HIS MIND AT THE MOMENT. HIS SUGAR NEGOTIATIONS ARE STYMIED, AND HE HAS JUST THREATENED STRIKE ACTION IF THERE IS NO PROGRESS SOON. PANDAY RECENTLY TOLD A UK HICOM OFFICER THAT HE WOULD PREFER TO HAVE THE SUGAR NEGOTIATIONS BEHIND HIM BEFORE BECOMING LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION AGAIN. FOR THE TIME BEING, PANDAY SAID, HE WAS CONTENT TO LET SHAH MAKE A MESS OF THINGS AS LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION, THEREBY FURTHER UNDERMINING HIS RIVAL'S POLITICAL CREDIBILITY.
FOX

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Message Attributes

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